would be lacking if the recent operations had resulted in driving the enemy across the Meuse.

The First Sea Lord pointed out that shipping might prove the decisive factor and undertook to investigate the transport facilities likely to be available to the United States in 1918.

On a review of the foregoing considerations the War Cabinet decided :—

Cabinet decision to continue offensive.

1. That the British representatives at the Conference should press the French to continue the offensive.

2. If, after hearing General Petain's views or after a conference between the Generalissimo and General Petain, they were not satisfied that the French offensive would prove effective, they should insist on our entire freedom of action and on the French Army reoccupying the trenches recently taken over by the British forces.

The Imperial War Cabinet was influenced by these considerations to support the advice given by the British military leaders that the best course to pursue in the immediate future was to continue the pressure on the Germans in France, in order to prevent them from releasing their troops for an offensive which would finally put a distracted Russia out of action, and also to make it impossible for Germany to send any divisions to the aid of the Austrians in the impending

attack upon them by the Italians. In the sequel we found that the policy of an active offensive in the West achieved neither of these results, whilst it ended in colossal losses for our Army,

At the request of Sir Douglas Haig and Sir William